

Ju Ting

Scales

Exhibition in Beijing: 31.8.–20.10.2019

Opening: Saturday, August 31, 4–6.30pm

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is pleased to announce artist Ju Ting's (*1983) solo exhibition *Scales*, her first solo exhibition at Galerie Urs Meile Beijing following her 2018 solo exhibition *Ju Ting* in Lucerne. This exhibition will present the artist's latest works from her *Pearl* and *Untitled* series. The artist applies many layers of acrylic paint on top of each others onto a wooden panel until obtaining a certain thickness. She then uses various methods to manipulate and model the stacked layers of color.

In the *Pearl* series, the artist uses a carving knife to cut open the paint and reveal the stacked layers of color within. Here the knife plays the role of the paintbrush, forming three-dimensional brushstrokes. At the same time, the artwork's surface is embedded with many faintly visible layers. If the viewers move through the exhibition space, they will perceive the subtly shifting colors produced by the rows of vertical lines. Optical rhythm catalyzes a once plain two-dimensional space, creating motion within the picture.

As Ju Ting's creations developed into the *Untitled* series, her artistic language continually moved forward in a progression revolving around the uniqueness of medium. With diluted acrylic, it is possible for the water and oil to separate. This means that if the neighboring layers of paint are not tightly adhered, each layer can be completely opened up. The artist then decided to peel back several of these dried, "all-over" layers in complete pieces, and lay them atop another wooden panel. Unlike the *Pearl* series, the traces of breakage presented in the *Untitled* series are mainly the products of the artist's own actions, rather than the work of tools.

Within a single series, Ju Ting experiments with a variety of actions to explore their visual implications. *Untitled 063019* (2019, acrylic on board, 205 × 169 × 11 cm) presents a relatively flat surface encasing the textures of the other layers below, but the thread of her work is revealed through breaks in the surface. In *Untitled 072619* (2019, acrylic on board, 236 × 193 × 14 cm), the layers of color are laid out on the panel in their entirety, squeezed together to form wrinkles and color changes in the material. The complexity presented in the surface of *Untitled 072919* (2019, acrylic on board, 40 × 46 × 9 cm) combines multiple operations, including stacking, ripping, folding and suspension. *Untitled 080219* (2019, acrylic on board, 65 × 66 × 10 cm) leaves the wooden panel base exposed.

The creation of the *Pearl* and *Untitled* series can be seen as a process of constantly maintaining balance between control and serendipity. In other words, the presence of the artist's hand causes the apparently orderly composition to deviate from mechanical uniformity. Adjusting the thickness and evenness of the paint applications, changing the depth and width of the carved lines, tearing away layers at different levels of force and speed... These different elements of manual control influence each other across layers, with the operator sometimes intentionally damaging the picture and producing texture, and sometimes happily accepting the unconscious aesthetic of glitches.

It is hard to simply classify Ju Ting's practice as abstract painting, though she has clearly excluded representational content from her work process. Yet the layers of color and the various forces applied to them both by hand and by tool have visualized an indescribable, even obscure reality, a material reality presented through systematic explorations marked by constant uncertainty. This is especially the case for the *Untitled* series, with the covering, peeling and stacking of entire layers of color demonstrating destructive violence and sagging weight. Ju Ting's creative approach applies external forces on each "image layer." The cut, folded and torn picture presents plasticity, as if form is organically generating from within the image.

Ju Ting was born in Shandong in 1983, and currently lives and works in Beijing. She graduated from the Printmaking Department with a BA in 2007, and with a master in 2013.